

KEEPING THE PROMISE

RETENTION SURVEY OF STUDENTS
STUDYING UNDER RTE SEC 12(1)(C)



INDUS ACTION



Georgetown
University

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About Indus Action

At Indus Action, we are at the frontline in solving the entrenched challenge of poverty and systemic barriers that keep large sections of the Indian population unable to access their welfare entitlements. Since 2013, our work has helped over a million citizens access entitlements in education, maternity, and various livelihoods provision. Our guiding beacon is a simple yet powerful conviction: every family in India, particularly those subsisting on an income of less than Rs. 10,000 (\$135) per month, should have unrestricted access to their welfare entitlements; entitlements that grant them a path to quality education, robust health, and secure livelihoods, amongst others. As we navigate the intricate web of policies and regulations, we are faced with the towering figure of 890 million citizens, a segment that continues to live below the poverty line, trapped in a maze of systemic inefficiencies that hinder access to welfare rights anchored in education, health, and livelihood security. The journey to upliftment is anchored to over 500 schemes, a wide range of opportunities that unfortunately culminate in low-impact delivery, leaving a substantial portion of the populace grappling with poverty. At the core of our work lies the transformative Portfolio of Welfare and Entitlement Rights (PoWER). It is not just a portfolio but a testament to our unwavering commitment to redefining the boundaries of welfare in India, translating the 500+ fragmented low-impact schemes into a consolidated set of 5-10 high-impact, accessible welfare schemes.

About Georgetown University's, Master of International Development Policy Program Capstone Project

Students at McCourt School's Master in International Development Policy (MIDP) have the opportunity to complete a client-based policy analysis capstone project as a requirement of their degree. The Retention Survey 2024 was conducted as part of Georgetown University's MIDP capstone project. The goal of the capstone project is to collaborate with a client to produce an applied empirical report that addresses policy-relevant questions. Students aim to apply their quantitative curriculum in research methods, data science, and economics to a real-world project in the international development space. For the Indus Action project, MIDP students aim to develop skills in survey design, monitoring and evaluation, sampling methodology, data cleaning and analysis, and report writing.

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I. Executive Summary

In an effort to promote educational equality and social inclusion, India passed the Right to Education Act in 2009. The act guarantees free and compulsory elementary education for children in grades 1-8. Clause 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act specifically mandates that private unaided schools reserve 25 per cent of their seats in elementary grades 1- 8 for children from economically weaker sections and disadvantaged groups. While the number of students gaining access to private school education under the RTE 12(1)(c) clause is reported through government websites, the demographic of the students being admitted, the retention rates once admitted, and the social and financial constraints they might experience in their schooling are not. Thus, Indus Action has been studying students' retention, educational status and discrimination faced by students admitted under Section RTE 12(1)(c) since 2017. Studying retention allows governments to check for the successful implementation of the provision and to determine whether private schools are an optimal choice for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In collaboration with Indus Action (IA), a team of Georgetown University, (Washington DC, USA) Master of International Development Policy (hereinafter, MIDP) students have re-designed and implemented the 2024 Retention Survey in three states: Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Odisha. In contrast to previous versions of the survey, this survey seeks to interview two separate cohorts: students who were admitted in the 2021-2022 academic year (hereinafter 2021-22 cohort), and those who were admitted in the 2022-2023 academic year (hereinafter 2022-23 cohort). This design was adopted in order to measure trends in retention and discrimination over time for one cohort and cross-sectionally between different cohorts.

Students in the survey are admitted to Nursery, LKG (Lower Kindergarten), UKG (Upper Kindergarten), and Class 1 depending on the entry class of the school they are admitted to. The study reports on students after one and two years, respectively, of admittance into RTE 12(1)(c) via telephonic surveys of 4,540* parents of admitted students. Overall, the survey has a response rate of 67% ($4,540^*/6,764$). The retention rate is 86.5% for the RTE 2021-22 cohort and 93.2% for the 2022-23 cohort. This study finds that a marginal difference between the retention rates of girls and boys in the 2022-23 cohort, however the retention significantly varies with girls(92.8%) showing higher retention than boys (81.8%) in the 2021-22 cohort.

¹ *The enumerators were able to make contact with 4,846 parents, however the survey was completed with 4540 respondents. For the purpose of this study we only report the completed surveys. In instances where the survey was started but was not completed are not reported.

I. Background and Context

Indian Education System

The rapid growth of private schools is one development that has dramatically changed the Indian educational landscape in recent years. 45% of children are enrolled in private schools at the primary level (~33% in rural and ~50% in urban areas) (Romero & Singh, 2022), compared to 19% in low- and middle-income countries overall (Das et al., 2023). The result has been characterised as an “active educational marketplace”, with multiple schools, even in rural areas, competing for parents and students (Tahir et al, 2007). While this growth has included a proliferation of low-cost private schools, de facto segregation manifests in the education system through the differential ability to pay school fees, selective admissions, and sorting of households across neighbourhoods. Moreover, there is considerable heterogeneity in amenities, fee levels, and quality among private schools (Romero & Singh, 2022).

In addition to de facto segregation in schools, India, along with many other low and middle-income countries, struggles with high dropout rates across its education system. India has the world’s largest education system, but it ranks second worldwide in learning inequality, just behind South Africa (Muralidharan & Singh, 2021). Four in ten young people in India exit the education system before reaching 18 years of age (IFHD, UNDP). More specifically, the 2018-19 IHD-UNDP report highlights that the dropout rate at the primary school was 4.5% in 2018 and increased to 18% at the secondary level (Indus Action, 2022). The reasons for dropouts are varied, ranging from lack of interest, engagement in economic or household activities, family migration or relocation to poor quality of teaching, distance and cost of travel to school, or financial constraints (Juneja, 2010). To address segregation amongst private and public schools and financial constraints that may result in low retention or higher drop-out rates, India passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act - commonly denoted RTE (Right To Education) Act - of 2009.

RTE Section 12(1)(c)

The RTE Act guarantees free and compulsory education to all children ages 6-14 in India. It was motivated by concerns that growth in private schooling would lead to increased segregation of schools and of classrooms, such that students from disadvantaged backgrounds would have difficulty in accessing quality education (Romero & Singh, 2022). Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act stipulates that private, unaided, non-minority, recognised schools reserve at least 25% of seats in their entry-level classes for children belonging to marginalised children, including:

- Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)
 - Below Poverty Line (BPL) or

- Family income is below the limit set by the respective state government.
- Disadvantaged Groups (DG)
 - Other Backward Classes (OBC)
 - Children With Special Needs (CWSN)
 - Scheduled Castes (SC)
 - Scheduled Tribes (ST)
 - Transgenders
 - CNCPC (Child in Need of Care and Protection) - Orphans etc.
 - Children/Children of parents who are HIV positive
 - CWSN (Children with Special needs)

RTE 12(1)(c) is the world's largest program for public funding and private provision of education, with 16 million seats potentially available in the next eight years. RTE thinker Vinod Raina remarked that “The larger objective of Section 12(1)(c) is to provide a common place where children sit, eat and live together for at least eight years of their lives across caste, class and gender divides in order that it narrows down such divisions in our society” (Sarin et al, 2007). However, the clause has been highly debated since its inception.

Despite a legal mandate to implement RTE Section 12(1)(c), the provision is yet to be implemented in some states and Union Territories (UT). As per the Supreme Court notice in February 2023, 13 states and UTs, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Sikkim, Telangana, West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir and Puducherry are yet to implement RTE Section 12(1)(c) (Indus Action, 2023). Furthermore, amongst nine states² analysed by Indus Action (2022), a large proportion of seats remain unsubscribed: the average fill rate is only 56%, ranging from a high of 79% in Gujarat to a low of 0% in Haryana. The literature on challenges to RTE 12(1)(c)'s implementation enumerates a large variety of reasons for which, as previously highlighted, participation in the policy overall remains suboptimal. For instance, Indus Action (2021) lists the following:

- Hidden costs for parents after admission, including lunch fees, transport, and examination fees³
- Lack of transparency about per child cost⁴, to be reimbursed by the state

² Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

³ Private schools are technically not legally permitted to charge these sorts of hidden fees (Indus Action, private correspondence).

⁴ For every child admitted in private schools under the RTE 12(1)(c) provision the state reimburses a per child cost to the schools. This cost is decided by the state government as per the directions of the RTE act, Section 12(2).

- Delay in payment from state governments to schools (of up to a year or more)
- Low awareness of the policy and its benefits, among eligible parents
- Complex admissions process, which requires procuring documents and applying
- Discrimination in schools:
 - a. Evidence of discrimination in academics and in access to facilities for children entering via RTE 12(1)(c), whether from teachers, school administrators, other students' parents, or other students.
 - b. Potential discrimination RTE students may be experiencing within RTE private schools.
 - Children being bullied by non-RTE students
 - Children being asked to sit in separate classrooms as non-RTE students
 - Parents being asked to pay fees for things such as books or uniforms, which should be included in the program
 - "... often speak of teachers beating them, and complain that teachers [sic] waste class time rather than attending to their needs in imparting quality education." (Development & Research Services (P) Ltd, 2021).

Indus Action Retention Survey

Indus Action found that while research is available on children's access to RTE and potential constraints, there is not much research on retention rates and social inclusion experiences of children in the program. Thus, since 2017, IA has conducted retention surveys across states in India to determine whether the children who were admitted into private schools under RTE 12(1)(c) were still enrolled in the same schools. IA has conducted these surveys via telephonic mode to cut costs from in-person surveys. Their most recent retention survey report (2023) finds a 95 per cent retention rate within their studied regions.

For the 2024 iteration of the RTE Retention Survey, IA has partnered with Georgetown MIDP students to design an updated questionnaire and support the implementation of the survey and analysis of data. More specifically, the objectives were as follows:

1. Assess whether and how the current survey indicators can be revised, in formulating new proposed survey questions:
 - a. State-wise retention
 - b. Retention by the categories of application and gender
 - c. Medium of awareness about the policy and applications for admission
 - d. School quality indicators to assess child social discrimination and parental financial discrimination (for example, being asked to pay fees that they should not be paying).
2. Enhance the survey design, sampling methodology, and implementation for the 2023 RTE 12(1)(c)

survey.

3. Gather and analyse data from the survey to discern meaningful outcomes and indicators for retention and inclusion.

4. Compile a comprehensive report encompassing survey results and methodology and suggest next steps for future surveys and dissemination to the IA team.

III. Research Questions

The revised retention survey questions were developed to answer the following research questions, in consultation with Indus Action:

1. **Response Rate:** Proportion of respondents who successfully finished the survey out of the total phone numbers dialled.
 - 1.1. Are there any changes in the demographic characteristics of those newly accepted into the RTE 12(1)(c) provision (2022-2023 cohort) compared to the 2021-2022 cohort in the response rate?
2. **School retention and grade progression**
 - 2.1. What proportion of the incoming cohort (those entering 2022-23) and previous cohort (those entering 2021-22) of RTE students have:
 - 2.1.1. Switched schools (to schools other than the one allotted under RTE 12(1)(c))?
 - 2.1.2. Dropped out of schooling completely?
3. **Student and Parent Experience: Teachers, Relationships & Discrimination**
 - 3.1. Do parents of RTE students perceive that their child is socially discriminated against?
In particular:
 - 3.1.1. Do they perceive that their children receive attention and support from their teachers?
 - 3.1.2. Do they perceive that their children are socially isolated and less integrated?
 - 3.1.3. What is the frequency of their interactions with their children's teachers?
 - 3.1.4. Do parents of RTE students perceive that they are financially discriminated against? In particular:
 - 3.1.4.1. Are they required to pay any fee(s) associated with their schooling?
 - 3.1.4.2. If they are required to pay the school-related fees, are they comfortable doing so?

IV. Literature Review

Based on the Retention Survey of Students Studying under RTE Section 12(1)(c) for Academic Year 2021-2022, the MIDP team revised the retention survey for Academic Year 2022-2023 (Indus Action, 2022). Indus Action requested that the MIDP team revise the new survey so that it is more grounded in research and makes a better attempt to incorporate the perspectives of students. Additionally, given time and budget constraints, it was decided to conduct the survey telephonically and use SurveyCTO to record responses. To facilitate this, the MIDP team conducted a literature review of India's education sector and the RTE Act, best practices in phone surveys and focus groups, and best practices in public-private partnerships. As a result of said research, the MIDP team developed a Theory of Change for the Retention Survey ([Appendix I](#)).

The literature review revealed several internal validity challenges that must be recognised and considered for future iterations of the survey. First, according to India's Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), while over 95 % of households have mobile phones in India as of 2022, it varies greatly across gender, income, and rural versus urban communities (ASER, 2022). For example, within rural communities, only 46% of women possess mobile phones, compared to 69% of urban women (NFHS, 2022). Thus, mobile telephone surveys may face challenges in accurately representing the lowest-income individuals admitted to private schools under RTE Section 12(1)(c). Second, phone surveys inherently create a self-selection bias by interviewing those who have both the time and motivation to participate, which could lead to the exclusion of poorer communities. Third, phone surveys lack the ability to build trust with recipients, which can impact how honest participants are. Finally, while RTE surveys are mostly about the child's experiences in RTE, the respondents are all parents, which can bias questions, especially regarding social discrimination in school (JPAL, 2020). Recommendations for addressing these challenges are added in the Recommendations section.

Another key consideration is that research has demonstrated that ~70% of applicants of RTE 12(1)(c) who are not assigned an RTE seat attend private schools by paying fees (Romero & Singh, 2022). Romero and Singh (2022) further conclude that information constraints and administrative burdens of certifying eligibility in the form of documents are factors that limit participation from the most marginalised sections. The MIDP team spoke to one of the authors of that study, Prof. Abhijeet Singh, who suggested that continued efforts to address information constraints and administrative burdens by local organisations, such as Indus Action, may result in more marginalised students entering the program each year. Thus, conducting annual surveys to compare differences in demographics, retention rates, and social inclusion at different cohort levels can demonstrate the effectiveness of the implementation of the said provision and demonstrate whether the RTE Section 12(1)(c) is benefiting the most marginalised sections.

V. Methodology

Cohort Design

The 2024 retention survey examines child retention rates social and parental financial discrimination. The survey was conducted with parents of two cohorts of RTE students; the older cohort (2021-22) was the same cohort surveyed in the Indus Action's 2023 Retention Survey. The younger cohort (2022-23) represents students admitted in the 2022-23 academic year. Our motivation for surveying two cohorts is drawn from two stylised facts affecting retention and discrimination:

1. Change in retention rates year over year. Currently, all children surveyed are in primary grades, and IA plans to check student retention for the 2021-22 cohort for four years, checking for attrition year over year.
and
2. The socioeconomic composition of incoming RTE applicants changes with each academic year as a result of ongoing efforts to reduce constraints for RTE entry amongst the most disadvantaged children (Abhijeet Singh, private correspondence).

In regards to retention, IA aims to:

1. Examine the trend in drop-out rates over time for last year's cohort (cohort 2021-22), and
2. Cross-sectionally compare retention rates between cohort 2021-22 and subsequent cohorts over time (cohort 2022-23).

Concerning social and financial discrimination, IA aims to examine discrimination in the 2022-23 cohort against subsequent cohorts over time, such as 2024-25, 2025-26 cohorts and so forth. Thus, for this survey round, only cohort 2023-24 will receive social and financial discrimination questions (sections 3 & 4 of the survey). This approach allows IA to examine the integration of children in school over time. [Figure 1](#) shows the design in the current survey year (2024), whereby the entire sample from the 2021-22 cohort is surveyed (see Retention Report, Indus Action, 2023), and a sample is drawn for the 2022-23 cohort. In the following survey round in 2025, the 2021-22 cohort will be surveyed again, along with the 2023-24 cohort, and so forth in subsequent survey years. A panel design allows us to compare differences in demographics, retention rates, and social inclusion both cross-sectionally (between cohorts, i.e. 2021-22 vs. 2022-23 in 2024 survey year, 2021-22 vs. 2023-24 in 2025 survey year, etc.) and over time (by following one cohort in subsequent retention survey rounds, i.e. across survey years).



Figure 1: Timeline of proposed panel survey design in this year’s (2024) retention survey, featuring Cohorts A (2021-22) and B0 (2022-23).

Questionnaire Design

The current retention survey questionnaire is based on relevant literature that recommends the most appropriate questions to examine child retention rates, social discrimination and parental financial discrimination. The survey is broken up into four sections and is conducted with parents of children admitted and enrolled in private schools under RTE Section 12(1)(c). To confirm the respondents’ identities, the survey tool “SurveyCTO” had some fields of state application data,

specifically asking the respondents to confirm the parent's name, child name, gender, birthdate, and district before asking for consent to participate. While [Appendix II](#) contains the full questionnaire questions, below are the section overviews of the questionnaire:

- I. **Section 1:** Review and confirm the demographic characteristics of respondents, which are mostly the same as the 2023 survey.
 - A. Included questions regarding other household member's phone numbers & names to reduce the chance of losing respondents due to changing numbers in the future
- II. **Section 2:** Determines retention under RTE.
 - A. The respondent is asked if the child is still enrolled in the RTE 12(1)(c) allotted school, whether other children in the family go to private school as a proxy to measure the family's economic background, and to see if the RTE Section 12(1)(c) is actually helping the children from the poorest backgrounds receive education in private school.
 - B. If the child is no longer enrolled in their RTE 12(1)(c) allotted school, the respondent is asked why and examined to determine whether and why the child is either studying in another school or no longer in school.
- III. **Section 3 (only cohort 2022-23):** This section determines whether the child is socially isolated from peers and/or friends with students from "rich" families and whether the child is receiving attention from teachers. It also asks whether parents engage with teachers.
- IV. **Section 4 (only cohort 2022-23):** Determines whether the school charges the parents' fees, given that parents should not be paying for school fees of any kind. If yes, parents are asked what kinds of fees the school requests and whether they feel comfortable paying them. Additionally, the section includes four proxy questions to determine the family's economic background by asking if the family has a car, TV, refrigerator, and two-wheel vehicle.

Sampling

Previous Rounds of Data Collection

During the previous IA RTE Survey (2023), the sampling design consisted of a stratified random sampling by district and gender in Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Odisha. The sample of 6,919 parents, constituting the applications for the 25% reserved seats for EWS and DG categories for RTE 12(1)(c) admissions in Academic Year (AY) 2021-22, resulted in 4,055 parents/guardians consenting to speak to telephone callers and completing the survey. Applications included primarily nursery, kindergarten (KG), and Class 1 applicants, who were admitted to a private school under the RTE 12(1)(c) provision in AY 2021-22. The survey also included a comparison, or control group,

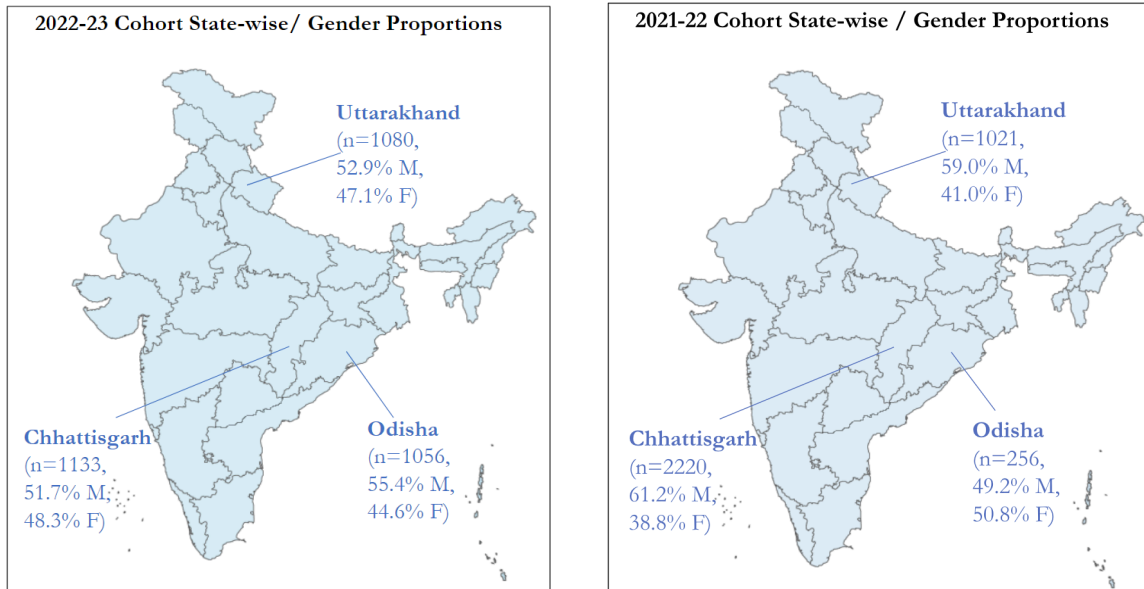
which consisted of 30 per cent of the initial sample who applied for RTE but were not admitted. The data was collected using the form.io Rapid Survey Tool application on the back end.

Sampling Strategy

The data for the survey was provided by the MIS (Management Information System) state application data of the governments of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Uttarakhand. The MIDP team created a sample that is stratified at the level of state and gender ([Figure 2](#)), for the 2022-23 cohort. The previous round of the survey utilised a stratified sample based on district and gender applications from the administrative data (see [Indus Action 2023 Retention report](#)). The same sample of the 2021-22 cohort is utilised for the current survey.

21-22 cohort was given a larger sample since parents in that cohort have been in the system for an additional year, so we assumed that they could have a higher likelihood of having new phone numbers and thus a potentially lower response rate. Overall, a sample of 6,746 respondents was drawn, including the two cohorts 2021-22 and 2022-23. The respondents included 3,268 students from 2022-23 cohort and 3,496 respondents from the 21-22 cohort. The sample was drawn out of 86,589 students listed as admitted/enrolled in the 2022-23 (“22-23” cohort) academic year, and 6,919 students in the sample for Indus Action’s 2021-22 Retention Survey (“21-22 cohort”). Below is a breakdown of the cohort samples:

- **22-23 Cohort:** This corresponds to 6% of the RTE 12(1)(c) applicants in the Chhattisgarh MIS (Management Information System) 22-23 cohort data provided, 10% of those from Uttarakhand, and 15% of those from Odisha. These state strata were sampled in order to elicit (approximately) equal numbers of absolute respondents from each state of ~1100 respondents per state. In the total population of admitted students in the three states, Chhattisgarh (56,696) substantially dwarf those in Uttarakhand (32,395) and Odisha (21,136).
- **21-22 Cohort:** Of the 4,055 respondents in the sample from the previous survey, MIDP team added all of the “admitted”(3,496) students to the overall sample, leaving out the non-admitted students. This was done considering the survey design in the current study focuses on retention of 2021-22 admitted students. It was found at the data analysis stage that phone numbers for 134 parents from Odisha was missing and hence they were not surveyed.



(a) 2022-23 cohort

(b) 2021-22 cohort

Figure 2: Graphical depiction of stratified sampling by state and gender, for 2022-23 and 2021-22 cohorts. M = Male, F = Female

Regarding sample size, while formal power calculations were not conducted, sampling modelling was utilised in order to estimate desired sample sizes by strata (state-gender cohort). See [Appendix III](#) for further details. The main finding from this modelling was that the average/effective sample size per stratum cell using a district/gender stratification strategy would be prohibitively small (a handful each), rendering district-wise comparisons underpowered. Hence, stratification was done at a larger administrative unit of state, as well as by gender. Sampling (as well as analysis) was conducted using the R and GitHub environments and is, hence, fully reproducible.

Survey Implementation & Data Collection Protocol

As stated in the Literature Review, mobile telephone surveys may face challenges in accurately representing the lowest-income individuals admitted to private schools under the RTE 12(1)(c) provision. Thus, in order to improve the coverage and response rates of our phone survey, we implemented a phone survey coded by SurveyCTO (see [Figure 4](#)) as well as a data collection protocol for enumerators to follow, for ease of data collection. Specifically, the team found that JPAL

recommends the enumerators start calling the respondents in the morning (JPAL, 2020). For those who don't pick up the phone, the enumerators are required to call 7 times in total (on Days 1-3).⁵

Enumerators were provided with a call log sheet that contained specific checkboxes where they could mark the status of the call for each respondent. The protocol and call sheet were added to the training protocol which the IA team implemented in India. The training protocol ([Figure 5](#)) demonstrated how enumerators can set up SurveyCTO on their phones and laptops ([Appendix V](#)), as well as training them on how to conduct the survey correctly (i.e. how to introduce the survey and ask for consent; how to ask scaling questions and open-ended questions).

Each of the eight enumerators conducting the survey had the following responsibilities:

- Conduct 10 successful calls per day
- Update the number of attempted calls and complete calls on the enumerator sheets, and upload the completed survey on SurveyCTO every day.
- Maintain confidentiality in data collection.
- When facing difficulties in conducting the survey, enumerators should consult their managers.
- Provide information as clearly and accurately as possible by keeping the respondent focused on the question and asking for clarification when necessary.
- Speak professionally and with respect to respondents
- Ensure they are in a quiet space, free of distractions, with sufficient network connectivity
- Mandatory attendance of weekly debriefs through Google Meet and daily correspondence with their respective manager over a phone call.
- Ensure to provide a summary of any issues that faced that day
- For incomplete or partially completed surveys, enumerators must inform their respective managers and update their call log sheet, providing valid reasons for the incomplete surveys.
- If the respondent disconnected, the enumerators should attempt to complete the survey by recalling at an interval of a few hours and on two alternative days.

After training enumerators, the MIDP team created a sample of 67 respondents subsampled from the main sample to conduct a pilot round of the survey. The pilot was conducted by the enumerators' managers. As a result of the pilot, the MIDP team revised several survey questions. Additionally, we conducted **backchecks** (structured callbacks to a subset of respondents) to check whether the data was correctly captured.

⁵ If enumerators do not reach a respondent on the first attempt, make 2 more attempts on the same day, spaced apart at intervals of approximately 3 hours (for example, call at 9am, 12 pm, and 4 pm). If after calling the respondent 3 separate times on the same day they still do not pick up, update the tracking sheet accordingly. If by the end of the day the number is still not reachable, repeat the same exercise on the next day (day 2). Call 3 times spaced 3 hours apart on day 2. If the enumerator does not reach the respondent on day 2, skip a day and call one more time on day 4.

Data Limitations

In addition to the inherent limitations of telephone surveys, which result in self-selection bias, some limitations can be the lack of representation of the lowest income populations due to limited access to phone connections, and a lack of trust-building over a phone call, the data also faced other challenges.

The duration of the calls conducted by the enumerators was 3-5 mins against the expectation of 8-10 mins per call. The reason provided by the enumerators for the shorter calling time was that due to the large number of calls conducted, they were able to memorise the questions and combine 3-4 questions to seek a response, which they then recorded on the survey tool. However, backchecks conducted matched the original response of the enumerators.

Some of the questions within SurveyCTO were slightly edited during the survey to include options that were not previously available. This was done to include some common responses that would provide a more comprehensive picture. For instance, in the question recording, the reason for the switch in school: one of the options added was, "quality of education" and was previous to the change being recorded under "other". As a result, some questions and answer options were not available for those who took the survey before the change, leading to respondents who selected the new answer option being underrepresented.

Additionally, changing the questions and answer options leads to data cleaning issues. After adding new questions and answer options, the codes of the responses were changed according to the order of questions and answer options. For instance, the answer options for frequency were 3- once a month, and 4 -Every week. However, when the answer option of Quarterly was added, the answer options became 3 - once a month, 4 - quarterly, and 5 - every week, according to the order of frequency. The change led to the difficulty in comparing original questions/ answer options with new questions/ answer options because 4 represents different frequencies before and after the change.

Another limitation in the data is the categories under which the students have applied for the RTE Section 12(1)(c) provision. Particularly in Odisha, the current round of administrative data used the umbrella term DG for a host of categories, including SC/ST caste groups, CWSN and others. This makes it difficult to analyse how many of the admitted students belonged to which category within DG, and makes 2021-22 and 2022-23 cohort comparisons difficult, as the previous survey round included the specific categories. Furthermore, it also hinders the inter-state comparisons for different categories of students.

Monitoring

The team conducted two data checks to determine the average call duration for surveys by cohort and enumerators. The first data check was conducted in March, and the second in April 2024.

The MIDP team created graphs showing the call duration for each enumerator and for each cohort (the graphs are not included in the report to protect the personal information of enumerators).

It was assumed that the 2021-22 cohort should have an average call duration of about four minutes since they were asked only Sections 1 and 2 of the survey, while the 2022-23 cohort, was asked all four survey sections, the average call duration expected was eight minutes. However, during monitoring, the average call times were found to be inconsistent with this assumption. This prompted the MIDP team to inform IA that further backchecks must be completed to assess the validity of the data collected since the call durations for the 2022-23 cohort were shorter. The IA team discussed the same with the enumerators and found the callers' memorising of the questions to be one of the reasons. The enumerator's managers conducted backchecks for 5 enumerators by randomly selecting 30 respondents interviewed by them before and calling back again to check if the answers they get are aligned with the answers the enumerator recorded. The responses were found to be consistent with those of the enumerators. While this does not fully explain the inconsistencies of call duration, better monitoring mechanisms like call recording for quality checks will be considered in the following survey rounds.

VI. Results

The survey results analysis is segmented into two cohorts, corresponding to the 2021-22 and 2022-23 cohorts, respectively. This involves analyzing retention rates amongst cohorts and describing the types of discrimination faced by children and their parents.

Response Rates

This report defines response rates as the proportion of respondents who successfully finished the survey, or, as [Table 1](#) states, "Proportion Completed". If, for any reason, a respondent failed to complete the survey, such as they hung up mid-way, the call dropped, and the enumerators were unable to contact them again, it is defined as "Attempted Calls," as stated in [Table 1](#) below. [Table 1](#) demonstrates the breakdown of the sample surveyed and response rates by cohort, gender, state, and category of application. In total, out of 6,764 attempted calls, 4,846 parents responded and 4540 completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 67%. Reasons for not completing the survey were vast - from wrong number, phone being switched off, to rescheduling - the overall response has thus far been average compared to other telephone surveys in LMIC (SurveyCTO, 2020)⁶.

⁶ [IDinsight SurveyCTO Phone Responses](#)

Response rates did vary by cohort (view total completed surveys by cohort and gender in [Appendix VI](#)). The 2022-23 cohort had a lower response rate of 61% compared to the 2021-22 cohort (73%). This was surprising as the team’s original assumption was that the older cohort would have lower response rates due to attrition, a greater incidence of relocation and phone number changes. It is possible that the 2021-22 cohort was more comfortable receiving calls and responding to surveys than the newer cohort, who have perhaps not been a part of phone surveys in the past. A possible explanation might be that the 2021-22 cohort encompasses all the parents previously surveyed by Indus Action. Thus, the unresponsive phone numbers of this group had already been excluded from the 2023 survey round.

With regard to gender, the response rates were identical for boys and girls within the 2022-23 cohort and had only a marginal difference (1%) for 2021-22 cohort. Concerning state-wise response rate, Chhattisgarh had the highest response rate at 74% for the 2021-22 cohort, followed by Uttarakhand at 73% and Odisha at 58% respectively. For the 2022-23 cohort Uttarakhand had a response rate of 66% followed by Chattisgarh (63%) and Odisha at 54%. Across both cohorts, it is interesting to note that Odisha had the lowest response rates of 58% for the 2021-22 cohort and 54% for the 2022-23 cohort. Finally, with regard to the category under which the student applied, ST group had the lowest response rate across both cohorts. As [Figure 3](#) shows, across both cohorts, the highest number of responses came from Other Backward Classes (OBC), Scheduled Castes, and Economically Weaker Sections, respectively.

Finally, it is difficult to compare response rates by the “category of application” ([Figure 3](#)), since these categories differ by state and year. For example, in Odisha, applicants had six categories to choose from in cohorts 2021-22, however, in the 2022-23 year, these categories were clubbed under two umbrella categories, DG and EWS.

Table 1: Response rates in terms of calls attempted and completed, by gender, state, and (government-listed) category of application, for each cohort

	Cohort 21-22			Cohort 22-23		
	Attempted Calls	Surveys Completed	Proportion Completed	Attempted Calls	Surveys Completed	Proportion Completed
Total	3,496	2,539	73%	3,268	2,001	61%
Gender						
Male	2,001	1,458	73%	1,680	1,029	61%
Female	1,495	1,081	72%	1,588	972	61%
State	3,496					
CG	2,219	1,643	74%	1,133	718	63%
OD	256	148	58%	1,055	573	54%
UK	1,021	748	73%	1,080	710	66%
Category	3,496					
EWS/BPL	797	618	78%	1,609	966	60%
SC	781	561	72%	401	263	66%
ST	448	305	68%	222	121	55%
OBC	1,308	945	72%	779	516	66%
CWSN	5	4	80%	-	-	-
Don't Know	157	105	67%	-	-	-
DG	-	-	-	257	135	53%

Completed Surveys by Category of Application

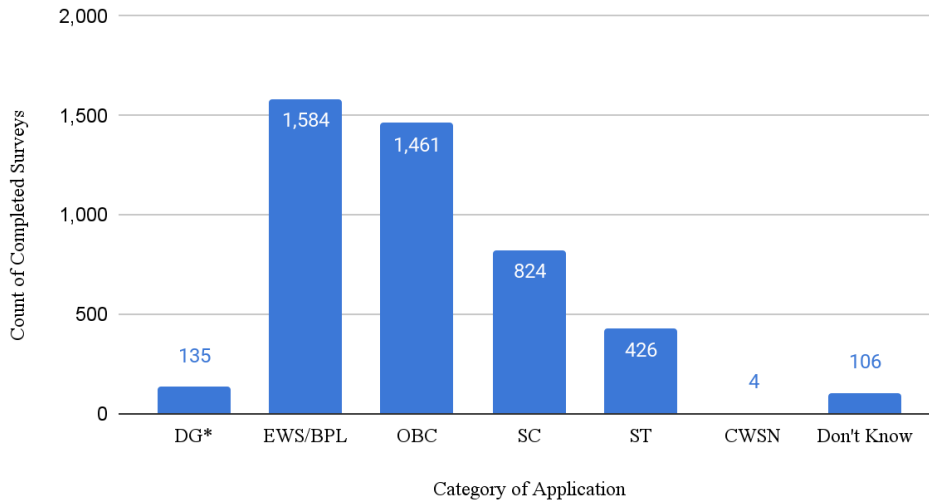


Figure 3: Number of completed surveys, by category of application, over both 2022-23 and 2021-22 cohorts.⁷

2021-22 Cohort : Categories of Applications by State

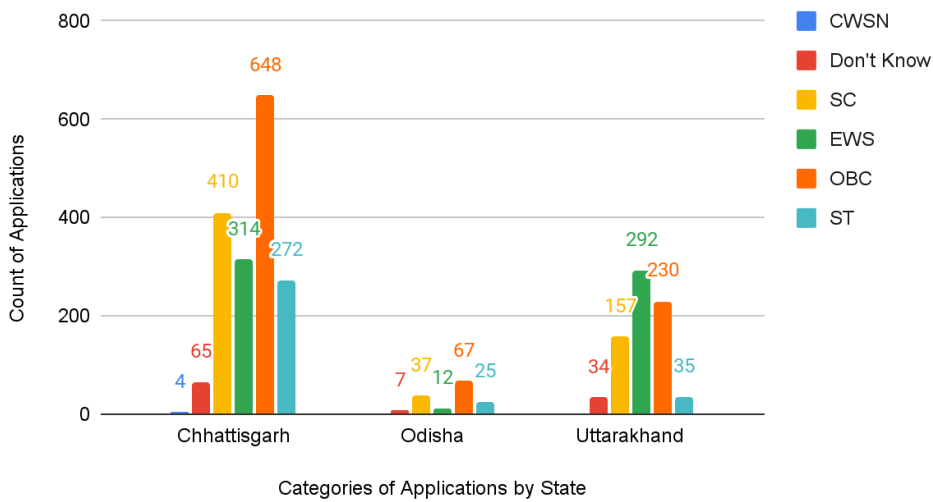


Figure 4: 2021-22 Cohort- Category of Application by State

⁷ DG is inclusive of categories like SC, ST, CWSN, etc.

2022-23 Cohort: Categories of Applications by State

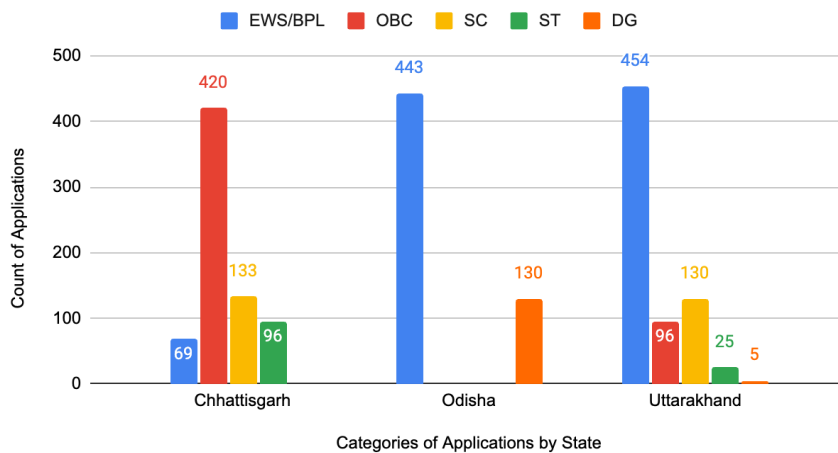


Figure 5: 2022-23 Cohort - Category of Application by State

Financial Status Proxy

The number of respondents who had at least one other child (other than the child enrolled under RTE 12(1)(c)) enrolled in a private school but was not receiving the RTE 12(1)(c) subsidy is shown in [figure 6](#). For children currently studying under the RTE 12(1)(c) provision, conditional on having at least one sibling in private school, almost half of them (45% in 21-22 cohort, 48% in 22-23 cohort) are in households with siblings in private school but not via the RTE 12(1)(c) provision.

Assuming their siblings are fee-paying, this could imply that the parents can afford private school for their children. This can be compared to research in Chhattisgarh, which shows that ~70% of applicants not assigned an RTE seat attend private schools by paying fees (Romero & Singh, 2022). In future iterations of this survey, this question can be asked of all respondents to infer financial status.

Cohort 2021-22	Cohort 2022-23
N =2539	N =2001
Children currently accessing Sec 12(1)(c)	Children currently accessing Sec 12(1)(c)
2195/2539	1865/2001
86.5%	93%
At least 1 sibling in private school	At least 1 sibling in private school
1237/2195	851/2001
56%	46%
Sibling in private school without access to Sec 12(1)(c)	Sibling in private school without access to Sec 12(1)(c)
555/1237	418/851
45%	48%

Figure 6: Proxy for Financial Status for Current RTE students with Siblings in Private School

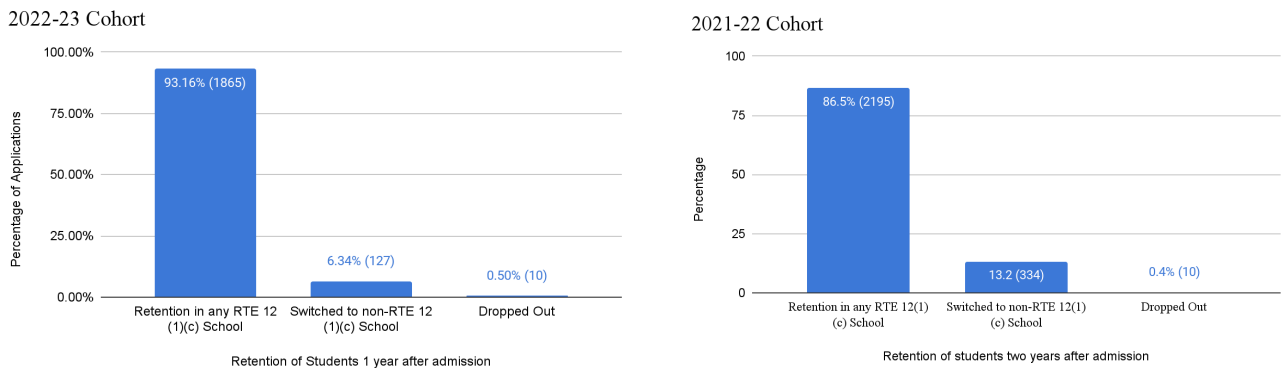
Retention Rates

We report retention rates by various levels of (dis)aggregation for each cohort, including overall retention rates, as well as those by gender, state, and category of application. We use the same definition of retention as in Indus Action’s (2023) previous retention survey, i.e. “the phenomenon where a child, upon admission to a private, unaided school under Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act, is continuing in that same school after a year of their admission”. We consider a student to be **“retained within any RTE 12(1)(c) school”** either if their parent confirms that the child is currently studying in the same school as the RTE 12(1)(c) enrollment state government records indicate for them, or currently studying in an RTE 12(1)(c) allotted school different from that listed in the state government records. The survey includes two categories of non-retention:

- **“Switched-to-another school”**: Students who were once in an RTE 12(1)(c) allotted school, but switched/moved to another school; and
- **“dropped out”**⁸: Students who dropped out of schooling entirely.

Figures 7 and 8 show the distribution of these retention categories for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 cohorts, in percentage and frequency terms, respectively. The 2022-23 cohort, representing those who were admitted to a private school under RTE 12(1)(c) over 1 year ago (as of Feb-March 2024), has a retention rate of 93.2%, a switch-to-another-school rate of 6.3%, and a dropout rate of 0.5%. The 2021-22 cohort, represents those who were admitted to a private school under RTE 12(1)(c) over 2 years ago has a retention rate of 86.5%, a switch-to-another-school rate of 13.2%, and a dropout rate of 0.4%. Hence, most of the difference in retention rates between the two cohorts (i.e. a lower retention rate for the older cohort) can be attributed to a higher switch-to-another-school rate among the older cohort. (See Appendix IV for a breakdown of reasons parents provided for switching schools.) While we are careful to note that the two cohorts have variable socioeconomic composition, rendering direct comparison difficult, one potential reason for this trend could be the longer period of time that students have been “in the system”, for the 2021-22 cohort. Another possible reason is the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated disruption to the Indian schooling system.

The absolute number of dropouts recorded is relatively small for both cohorts: only 10 for both the 2022-23 and 2021-22 cohort. The survey includes follow-up question asking respondents to summarise the reason for their child to drop out, the number of dropouts is too low to make any conclusions about children dropping out.



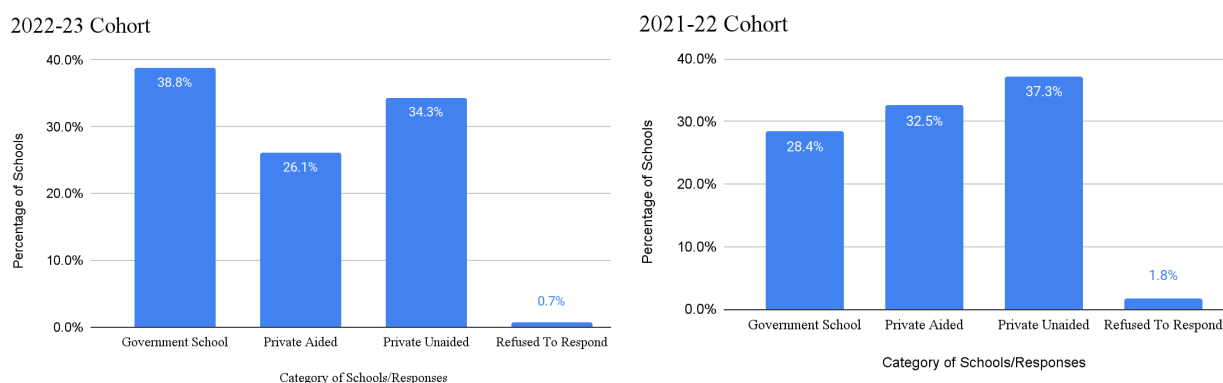
(a) 2022-23 cohort

(b) 2021-22 Cohort

Figure 7: Overall retention numbers, for 2022-23 and 2021-22 cohorts.

⁸ Note: This indicates self reported dropout by parents, i.e. child is not studying in any school.

In addition to the overall cohort-wise switching rates presented, we characterise the types of schools that children attending after switching from their RTE 12(1)(c) allotted schools in [Figure 8](#). Students switched approximately equally into government, private aided, and private unaided schools in both the 2022-23 and 2021-22 cohorts. For the 2022-23 cohort, government schools were the most common destination (38.8%), followed closely by private-unaided schools (34.3%); while for the 2021-22 cohort, private, unaided schools were the most common destination (37.3%), followed by private, aided schools (32.5%) and government schools (28.4%).



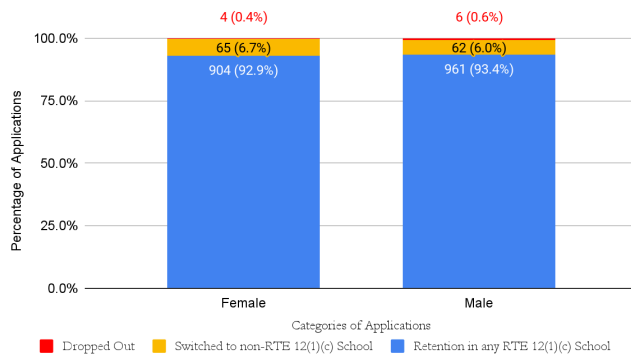
(a) 2022-23 Cohort

(b) 2021-22 Cohort

Figure 8: Types of schools switched into from RTE 12(1)(c) allotted schools, for 2022-23 and 2021-22 cohorts.

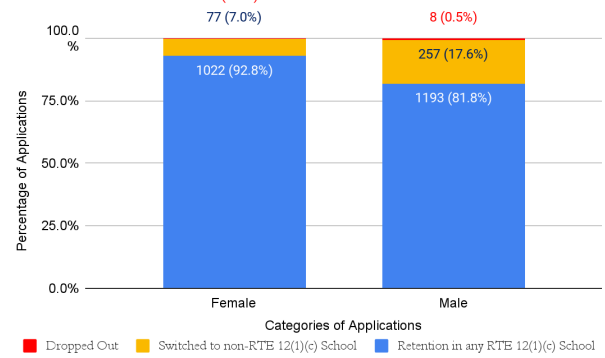
[Figure 9](#) shows the distribution of retention rates for each cohort, by gender. For the 2022-23 cohort, girls and boys are approximately equal, with 92.9% vs. 93.4% retention rates, respectively. In contrast, for the 2021-22 cohort, the differences are more substantively significant: retention rates are 92.8% and 81.8% for girls and boys, respectively. As was the case previously for overall retention rates, most of this difference in this older cohort is attributable to differences in switch-to-another-school rates, of 7% and 17.6% for girls and boys, respectively. Dropout rates also differ in a relative sense amongst girls and boys for this cohort, at 0.2% and 0.5%, respectively. Interpreting these observations again under the caveat that direct inter-cohort comparison is not possible, it can be inferred that retention for girls and boys is fairly similar at the beginning of their respective schooling journeys, but diverges over time - in this case, during the 2nd year after RTE school enrollment.

Cohort 2022-23: Categories of Applications by State



(a) 2022-23 Cohort

Cohort 2021-22: Categories of Applications by State

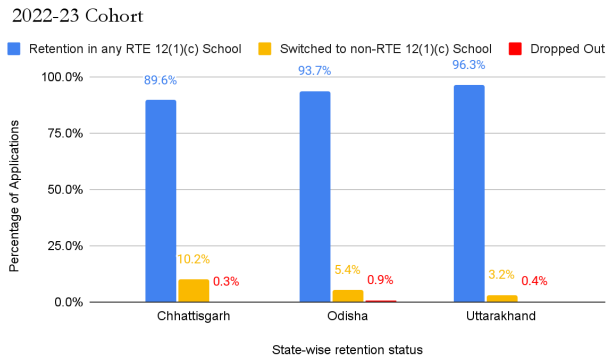


(b) 2021-22 Cohort

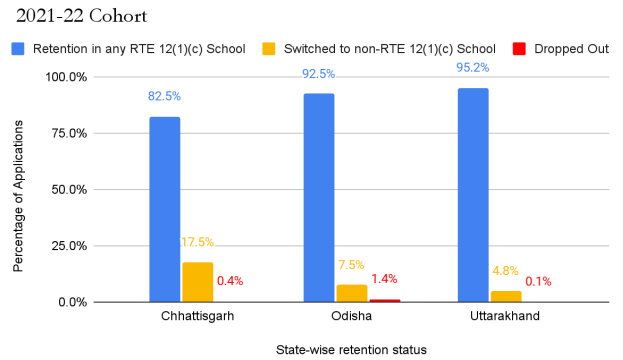
Figure 9: Retention rates by gender, for 2022-23 and 2021-22 cohorts.

On a state-wise retention basis, for the 2022-23 cohort, [Figure 10](#) shows that Uttarakhand has the highest retention rate (96.3%), followed by Odisha (93.7%), and Chhattisgarh (89.6%). For the 2021-22 cohort ([Figure 10](#)), Uttarakhand (95.2%) and Odisha (92.5%) show relatively higher retention rates than Chhattisgarh (82.5%). Despite its relatively high retention rate, Odisha has the highest dropout rate in both cohorts, at 0.9% and 1.4% for 2022-23 and 2021-22, respectively.

Keeping in mind that all three states have varying proportions of pre-primary RTE admitted/enrolled students, as well as primary ones, we restrict the analysis to primary levels (Class 1 and up) in [Figure 11](#). Specifically, this excludes Nursery, LKG (Lower Kindergarten), and UKG (Upper Kindergarten). The most obvious change occurs in Chhattisgarh for the 2022-23 cohort, as the state's retention rate increases from 89.6% (when including all schooling levels) to 95.0% (primary only), indicating higher retention at the primary level as compared to pre-primary level. However, the older cohort 2021-22 shows a reverse pattern for Chhattisgarh state: Retention decreases from 82.5% to 75.1%, when restricted to primary schooling.

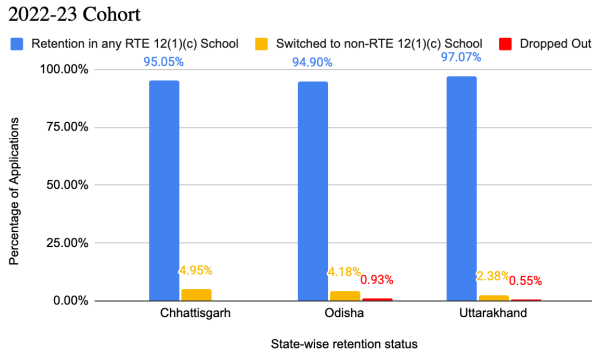


(a) 2022-23 Cohort

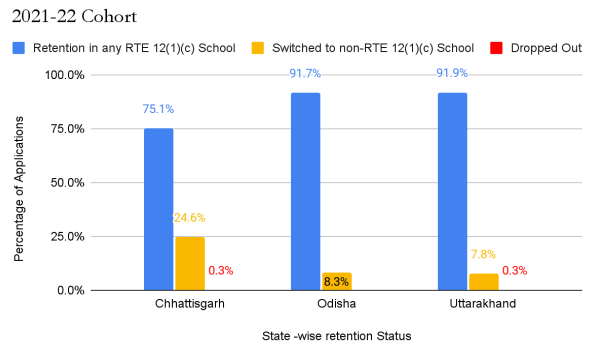


(b) 2021-22 Cohort

Figure 10: Retention rates by state, for 2022-23 and 2021-22 cohorts.



(a) 2022-23 Cohort

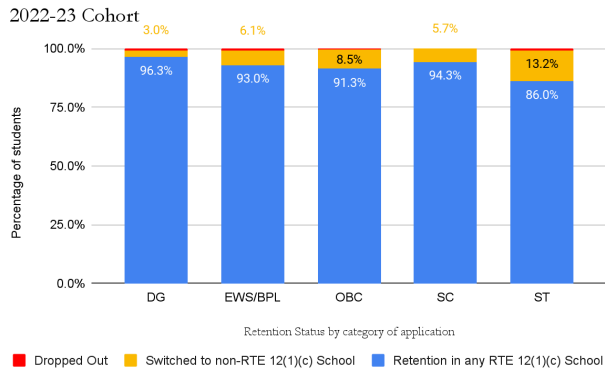


(b) 2021-22 Cohort

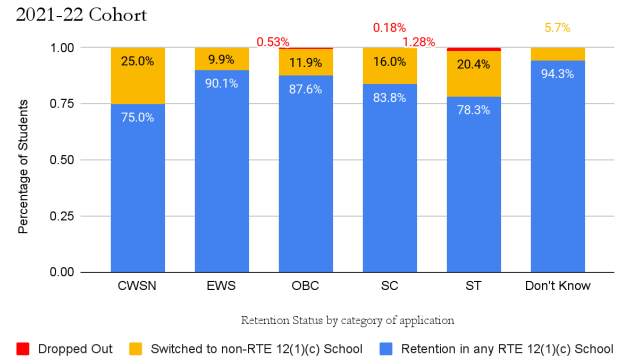
Figure 11: Retention rates by state, for 2022-23 and 2021-22 cohorts, restricted to primary schooling (Class 1 and above).

Figure 12 shows the distribution of retention by “category of application”, for the two cohorts. We use the category of application as identified in the state government MIS datasets, rather than the self-identified category of application. In the 2022-23 cohort ST indicate the lowest retention rate, at 86.0%, with a switch-to-another-school rate of 13.2%, and a dropout rate of 0.8%. For the 2021-22 cohort, the ST category similarly has the lowest retention rate at 78.3%⁹, with a switch-to-another-school rate of 20.4%. This is not surprising given that STs are among the most disadvantaged groups in India, in terms of health, education, and empowerment (Manna et al., 2022).

⁹ Excluding the category “Do Not Know”



(a) 2022-23 cohort



(b) 2021-22 cohort

Figure 12: Retention rates by category of application as per administrative data, for 2022-23 and 2021 cohorts.

Discrimination

Child Social Discrimination

The child social discrimination and the parental financial discrimination are only surveyed for the 2022-23 cohort due to the limitation of time and resources. In this section, we evaluate if students admitted under RTE 12(1)(c) are socially discriminated against in school by teachers and peers by using indicators such as teachers' attention, parents' engagement, invitations to relatively richer children's parties¹⁰, and other Likert scale questions, for instance, how strongly do you agree that your child enjoys being in school, how would you rate your child's overall experience with peers in school.

¹⁰ Those students who are studying in the same schools by paying fee.

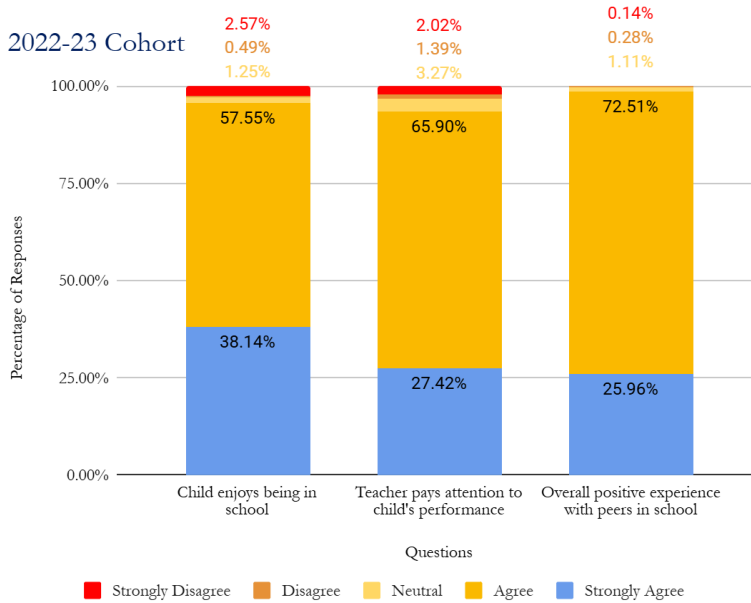


Figure 13: Children's experience in school with teachers and peers, for 2022-23 cohort.

As depicted in [Figure 13](#), 95.7% of parents strongly agree or agree that their children enjoy being in school, 93.3% of parents strongly agree or agree that the teachers pay attention to their children's performance, 98.5% of parents strongly agree or agree that their children have a positive overall experience with peers in school. Overall, most parents believe their children have good experiences in school with teachers and peers. However, 6.7% of parents strongly disagree, disagree, or are neutral that the teacher pays attention to their children's performance.

Cohort 2022-23

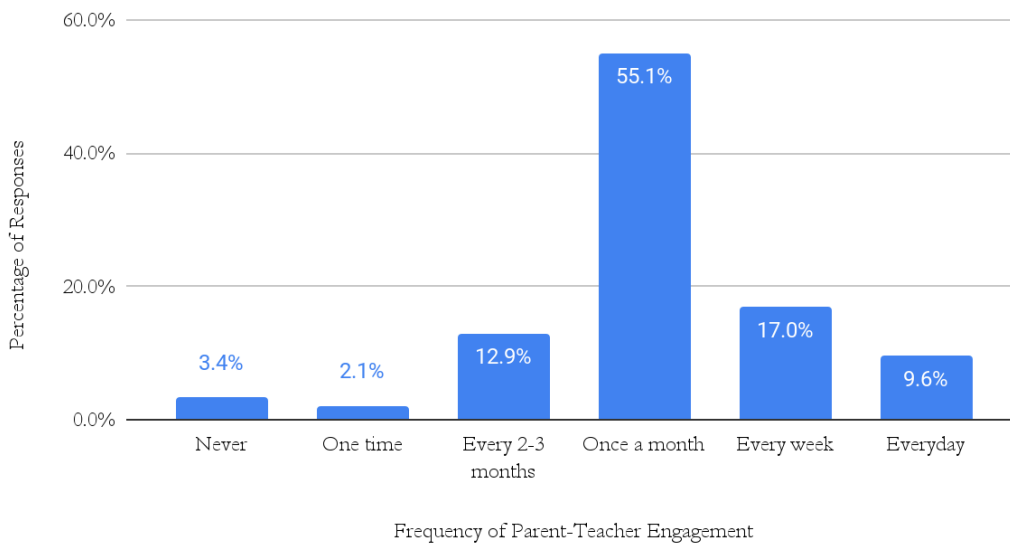


Figure 14: Parents' engagement with teachers, for cohort 2022-23.

Based on [Figure 14](#), 55.1% of parents engage with their children's teachers once a month, and 26.6% of parents engage with their children's teachers more than once a month. Overall, 81.7% of parents engage with their children's teachers at least once a month.

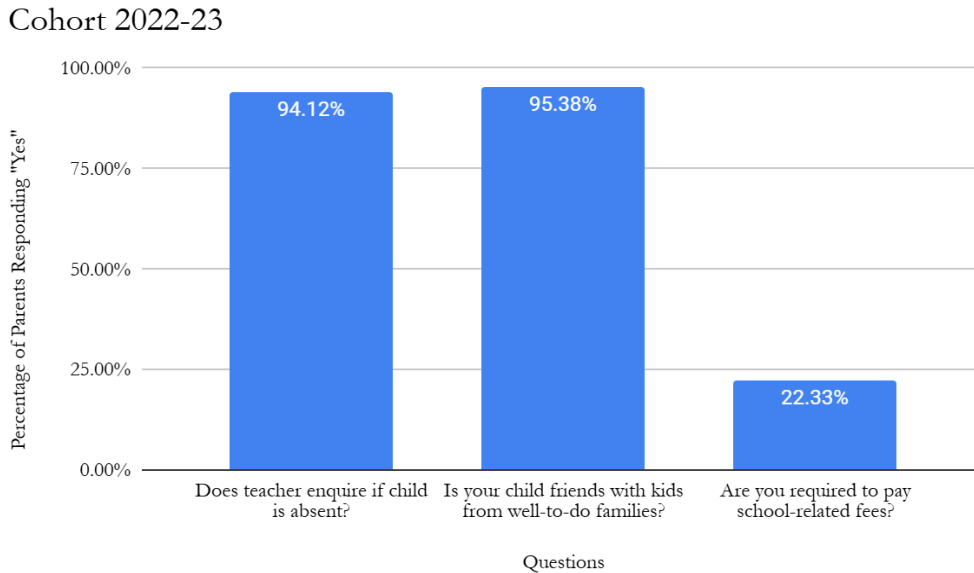


Figure 15: Social and financial discrimination against children, for cohort 2022-23.

As detailed in [Figure 15](#), 94.1% of parents agree that if their children don't go to school one day, the teachers will ask about them. 95.4% of parents agree that their child is friends with students from relatively richer households.¹¹

Based on the questions asked in this survey, a majority of the parents (more than 90%) do not report any explicit social discrimination against children. However, the number of parents that disagree with those statements might be underrepresented, since (1) the phone survey might not effectively capture the discrimination; (2) the indicators we use might not capture the social discrimination shown in cultural contexts and in more subtle ways; (3) respondents may fear that giving a negative review of a government provision may affect access (Indus Action, 2023) (4) the respondents of the survey are parents instead of children. Hence, children's experiences in school may not be accurately represented.

¹¹ Those students who are studying in the same schools by paying fee.

Parental Financial Discrimination

RTE Section 12(1)(c) requires private schools to provide free education for students, so the parents should not have to pay any school-related fees. However, in reality, due to the delay of payment from the government (up to and over a year) and other factors such as the school fee being higher than the stipulated per-child-cost reimbursement borne by the government, a number of parents are still required to pay school-related fees. These fees are charged under the name of admission fees, uniform fees, or textbook fees, which potentially affect the provision for those coming from lower-income families among the eligible groups. 22.3% of parents within our survey in cohort 22/23 are required to pay school-related fees ([Figure 16](#)). This section of the report assesses the comfort and challenges that parents face when required to pay school-related fees.

Cohort 2022-23

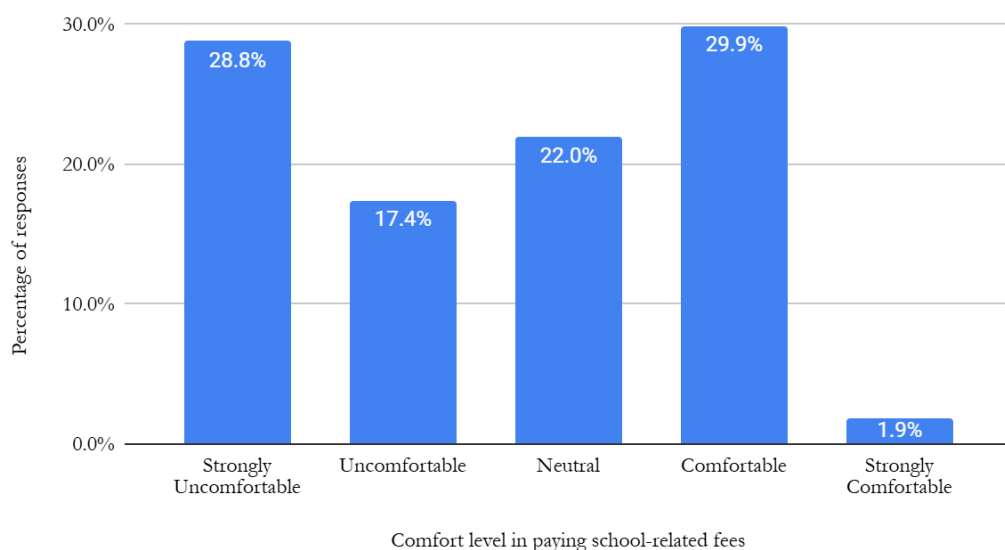


Figure 16: Parents' comfort levels in paying school fees, for cohort 2022-23.

Among parents who are required to pay school-related fees, 46.2% are strongly uncomfortable or uncomfortable paying them ([Figure 16](#)). The category of school fees that parents are required to pay is shown in [Appendix VII](#).

In conclusion, almost a quarter of parents are required to pay school-related fees, and almost half of the parents who pay the fees are uncomfortable in doing so. Implementation of Section 12(1)(c) still has obstacles, and it is worth further identifying the challenges using qualitative research and holding the private schools accountable.

VII. Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusion

This study is based on a survey of two cohorts of students admitted under Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education (RTE) Act in the Indian states of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Odisha, entering in the academic years 2022-23 and 2021-22. The telephonic survey was conducted between March to April 2024 with 4,540 parents/guardians of students, stratified by state and gender. Overall, the survey had a response (completion) rate of 67%. This was higher for the 2021-22 cohort (73%) than for the 2022-23 cohort (61%).

The study reports on students one (2022-23 cohort) and two years (2021-22 cohort) after admittance into RTE 12(1)(c). The retention rate for the 2022-23 cohort is of 93.2% and 86.5% for the 2021-22 cohort. Although we are careful to note that the two cohorts may differ in their socioeconomic characteristics and composition, this does match the expectation that retention decreases, for students admitted to private schools under Section 12(1)(c) for longer periods of time. While dropout rates are 0.5% for both cohorts, students switch to schools other than their RTE 12(1)(c) allotted schools at higher rates from the 2021-22 cohort, at 13.2%, vs. 6.3% in the 2022-23 cohort.

In terms of gender, we find higher retention rates for girls than for boys, corroborating Indus Action's (2023) previous 2021-22 survey round. However, this report finds that retention for boys and girls is approximately equal in the 2022-23 cohort, while girls are retained at far higher rates than boys in the 2021-22 cohort (92.8% vs 81.8%). Like the previous survey round, we also find higher retention rates in Odisha and Uttarakhand than in Chhattisgarh for both cohorts - though, for the 2022-23 cohort, this inter-state difference attenuates upon excluding pre-primary students. We also qualitatively match the previous survey's results in terms of category of application, whereby Scheduled Tribes (ST) applicants exhibited the lowest retention rate in comparison to other categories (78 for 2021-22 cohort to 86% for 2022-23 cohort).

Taken at face value, our questions regarding (potential) social and financial discrimination amongst parents and students, testing a central tenet of the RTE Act's Section 12(1)(c), overall appear to signify social integration amongst fee-paying and RTE 12(1)(c) admitted students. Contrasting common anecdotes, the survey results do not appear to imply the occurrence of large-scale social discrimination against RTE 12(1)(c) admitted students. This indicates that the specific RTE 12(1)(c) clause is on its way to achieving its larger objective of social integration. However, as with other quantitative research, we note the limitations of surveys in probing questions such as those regarding discrimination in an in-depth manner. With respect to financial discrimination, we find that 22% of

parents are required to pay school related fees, of which 46% of them are not comfortable paying these fees.

In accordance with our proposed two-cohort survey design approach, future rounds of the Indus Action retention survey will continue to illuminate retention and discrimination challenges both cross-sectionally between cohorts and over time for the 2021-22 cohort as they progress in their schooling journey.

Recommendations

To ensure continued, successful survey implementation in subsequent rounds of the RTE 12(1)(c) retention survey, we propose the following recommendations regarding survey design, implementation, monitoring, and analysis.

I. Design

R1. Qualitative Approach: The MIDP team conducted a desk review to create questions relating to and indicators measuring social discrimination afflicting RTE 12(1)(c) students. However, there is limited literature evaluating social discrimination in primary schools in Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Odisha. Future survey rounds could benefit from adopting a mixed methods approach by adding qualitative research methods, such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. A selection of respondents from the main survey could be sub-sampled to participate. Given the limitations of phone-based interactions in eliciting sensitive information regarding discrimination, key informant interviews and focus group discussions may be key in uncovering the factors and potential policy levers affecting the retention of the most vulnerable students. Key stakeholders may include parents, teachers, administrators, and students themselves (with appropriate ethical safeguards).

R2. Representativeness of Sampling: This study is focused on retention and the social and financial discrimination that can potentially influence retention. As stated in the sample design, the current sample may not be completely representative of the demographic characteristics of students who enrol under the provision in three states. Relative to proportional sampling, we chose to over-sample from Odisha and under-sample from Chhattisgarh, in order to achieve approximately equal (expected) absolute numbers of respondents from each state. However, if future survey rounds are influenced by the demographic characteristics of children enrolling in private schools under RTE 12(1)(c), it may be desirable to apply state-wise reweighting.

II. Implementation and Monitoring

R3. Call Management: Use of the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) case management approach could improve survey monitoring, and also help streamline the calling and call management process. In SurveyCTO, CATI options include managing phone calls and SMS, integration with third-party apps, decentralised data collection, audio and text audits and phone call logs, respondent tracking (call attempts and status), and rescheduling. With CATI, enumerators could make calls directly using a SurveyCTO interface, and calling managers would be able to track caller performance more efficiently.

R4. Increased Back Checks: Increasing the number and frequency of back checks could detect potential issues in data collection at earlier stages.

R5. Changing Survey Questions: Since changing questions after the start of data collection could lead to issues like decreased effective sample size and the ability to capture and cross-analyse accurate information, we recommend strict rules on changing the survey after the first week of data collection. While we conducted a pilot of 69 respondents, a round of data cleaning and analysis for the pilot phase may help solidify questions prior to the survey implementation phase.

R6. Financial Incentives: In future iterations of the telephone survey can consider offering respondents who give soft refusals to the survey top-up coverage to address potential self-selection bias of low-income households and increase their representation.

R7. Text Messages: Sending a pre-survey SMS message to inform respondents of the upcoming call could increase the response rates of marginalised groups, such as Scheduled Tribes.

III. Analysis

R8. Significance and Correlation: Future surveys could explore the potential correlation between characteristics (especially gender) and retention rate by cohort using T-tests, and via regression modelling. Additionally, exploring potential correlations between children's social discrimination/parent financial discrimination and retention rate could be useful in order to test the assumptions that (1) children who are isolated and ignored in school are more likely to drop out, and that (2) children whose parents are required to pay fees are more likely to drop out.

R9. Exploring Inter-State and Inter-Cohort Differences in Retention: While RTE 12(1)(c) is a central policy, states differ in implementation, including differences in eligibility criteria, per-child-cost,

and online application processes/portals (Indus Action, 2022). Differences in retention between states (in the same cohort), or between cohorts (in the same state) could be more contextually interpreted via a more detailed study of these RTE 12(1)(c) implementation differences between states, and over time.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Theory of Change for Retention Survey

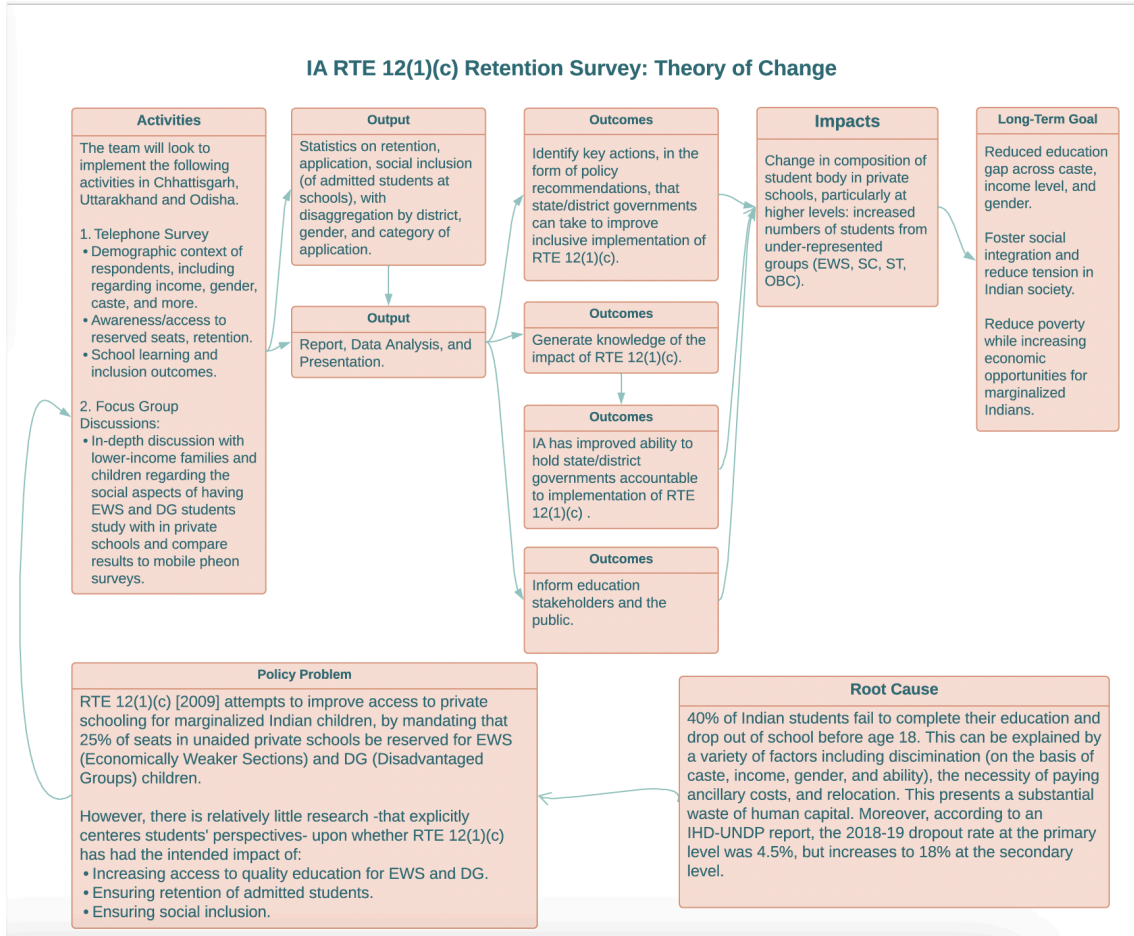


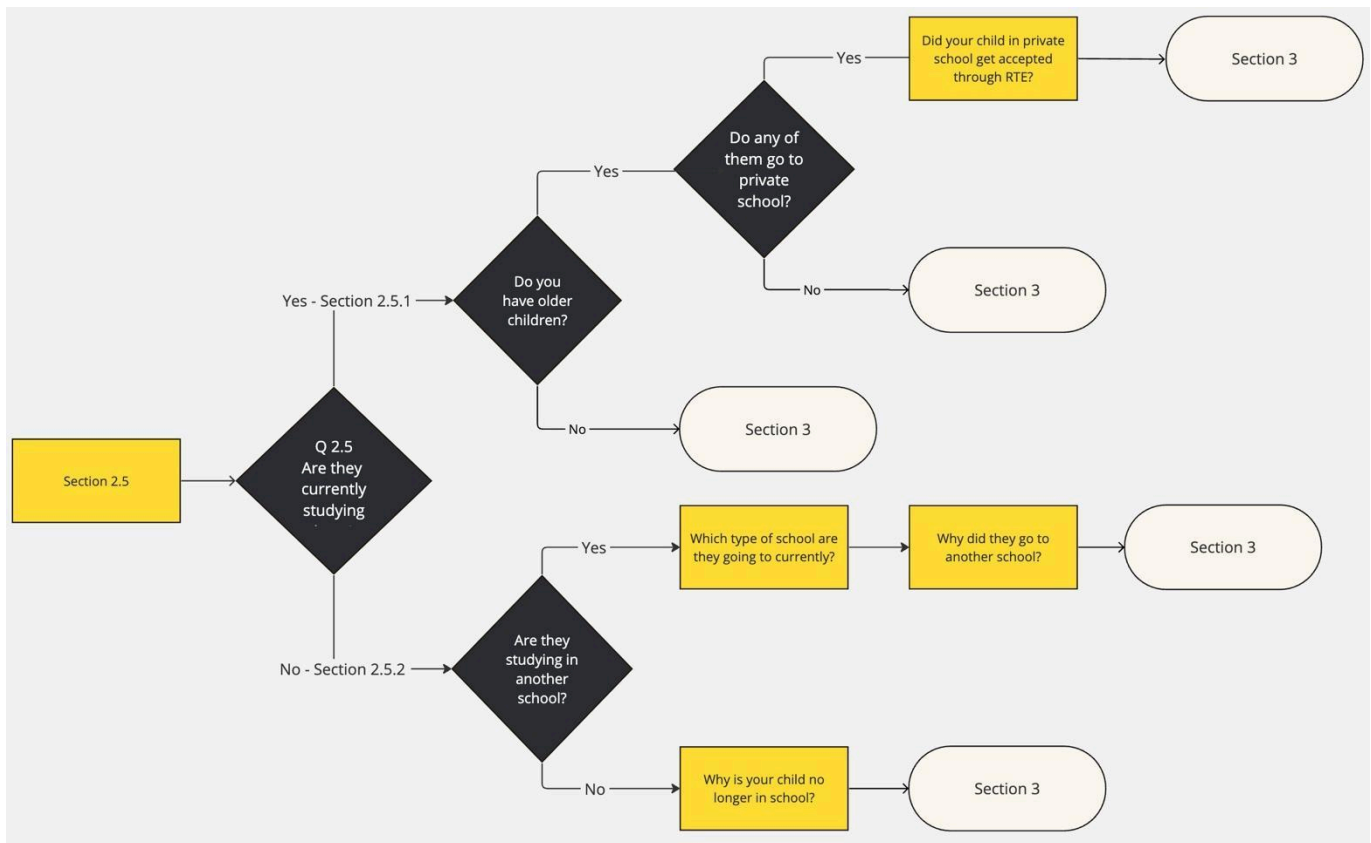
Figure A: Theory of Change devised by the MIDP team for the Capstone engagement with Indus Action.

Appendix II: Survey Question

Section 1		
Question #	Question	Answers
0.1	Hello, is this [insert parent name], and are you the parent/guardian of [insert child name], a [insert gender], born on [insert date of birth], from [insert district/city]?	yes/no
0.2	[if no to 0.1] Can you please pass the phone to the child's parent/caregiver or provide their phone number?	yes/no
0.3	<p>Hello [insert parent name], my name is (your name). I work with Indus Action, an organization/NGO that wants to improve children's access to private schools. We obtained your number from the state government and would like to talk to you about your child's experience in school. Can we have a moment of your time?</p> <p>We would like to invite you to participate in a survey about the RTE (12)(c) student experience. The survey will only take 5-10 minutes and all information provided is confidential. If you agree to take the survey, you may skip any question you prefer not to answer or choose to quit at any point during the survey. While we would be thrilled for you to be a part of our survey - however, it's OK if you choose not to participate.</p> <p>Do you agree to participate in this study? Your participation would be extremely valuable.</p>	yes/no
Section 1		
Question #	Question	Answers
1.1	What is your relationship with the child?	Father, Mother, Uncle, Aunt, Grandparent, Other
1.2	What was the category of application?	EWS, SC, ST, OBC, CWSN, SEBC, Child of Parent is HIV positive, Orphan, Other
1.3	Do you know what the RTE EWS admission scholarship is?	yes/no
1.4	How did you find out about the RTE / free EWS admissions program?	Newspaper Advertisement, Through the school notice board, Word of mouth in the community,

		Through a relative/friend, NGO/Social worker, Other
1.5	[If 'Other' to previous question] Then, how did you find out about the RTE / free EWS admissions program?	text
1.6	How did you fill out the RTE / free EWS admissions application?	On my own, Through a Cyber Café, Through an NGO/Social Worker, Help from a relative/friend, Other
1.7	[If 'Other' to previous question] Then, how did you fill out the application for RTE / free EWS admissions program?	text
1.8	Can you please provide 1 other family member's phone number?	yes/no
1.9	Enter phone number	text
1.11	What is their name?	text
1.12	What is their relationship to [insert child name]	Father, Mother, Uncle, Aunt, Grandparent, Other
Section 2		
Question #	Question	Answers
2.1	Our records show that your child was admitted into the RTE program. Can you confirm whether this is true?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond
2.2	Which class did your child get admitted to?	Nursery LKG (Lower KG) UKG (Upper KG) 1 st Class 2 nd Class or higher
2.3	Which academic year did your child start studying in school under RTE?	Entered Before 2021-2022 School Year Entered in 2021-22 School Year Entered in 2022-23 School Year Entered in 2023-24 School Year Refused to respond

2.4	Can you confirm that your child was admitted to [insert school name]?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond
2.5	Are they currently studying there?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond
2.6	What is the name of the school your child was admitted to under the RTE?	text
2.7	Are they currently studying there?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond



**** THE BELOW FLOWCHART DEPICTS SECTION 2.5.1 AND 2.5.2****

Section 2.5.1 – If “Yes” to 2.5 or 2.7

Question #	Question	Answers
2.5.1.1	Do you have any other child(ren)?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond
2.5.1.2	Do any of them go to private school?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond
2.5.1.3	[If yes to 2.5.1.3] Did any of the other children in private school get accepted through RTE?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond

Section 2.5.2 – If “No” to 2.5 or 2.1 or “No” or “I don't know” to 2.7

Question #	Question	Answers
2.5.2.1	Are they studying in another school/ Aanganwadi centre?	yes/no
2.5.2.2	[If yes to 2.5.2.1] Which type of school are they going to currently?	Government School Private aided Private unaided Madarsa/Religious school Unrecognised Private school Not Studying in any School
2.5.2.3	[If yes to 2.5.2.1] Why did they go to another school?	More affordable Could not afford transportation cost Long distance Discrimination Relocation Other
2.5.2.3.1	[If selected "OTHER" to 2.5.2.3] Please summarize the reason.	Text
2.5.2.4	[If no to 2.5.2.1] Please tell us why your child is no longer in school?	Could not afford education Could not afford transportation cost Long distance Child faced difficulty in studying Relocation Discrimination Needed support for household duty Needed support for work outside of home Other
2.5.2.4.1	[If selected "OTHER" to 2.5.2.4] Please summarize the reason.	Text

Section 3

Question #	Question	Answers
3.1	On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how strongly do you agree your child enjoys being in school?	1 - Strongly Disagree 2 - Disagree 3 - Neutral 4 - Agree 5 - Strongly Agree
3.2	On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how strongly do you agree that	1 - Strongly Disagree 2 - Disagree

	the teacher pays attention to your child's performance?	3 - Neutral 4 - Agree 5 - Strongly Agree
3.3	On a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 is very negative and 5 is very positive, how would you rate your child's overall experience with peers in school?	1 – Very Negative 2 - Negative 3 - Neutral 4 - Positive 5 – Very Positive
3.4	[If very negative, negative, or neutral to 3.3] Can you provide one example of how your child has not had a positive experience?	Text
3.5	In the last six months, how often do you (parent) engage with the teacher?	Never One time Once a month Quarterly Every 2 - 3 months Every Week Everyday
3.5	If your child doesn't go to school one day, will the teacher ask about them?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond
3.7	Does your child have any friends whose family owns a car?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond

Section 4

Question #	Question	Answers
4.1	Are you required to pay school fees?	Yes, no, I don't know, refused to respond
4.2	What are the fees you have paid for? For example: uniforms, textbooks, stationary, or transport.	Tuition, Exams, Admission, Uniforms, Textbooks, Tea Money, Stationary, School Trips, Science fairs, Craft Materials, Transport, Others
4.3	On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how comfortable are you paying for your child's school-related fees?	1 - Strongly Disagree 2 - Disagree 3 - Neutral 4 - Agree 5 - Strongly Agree
4.4	Do you have a TV?	yes/no

4.5	Do you have a refrigerator?	yes/no
4.6	Do you have a two-wheel vehicle?	yes/no
4.7	Do you have a car?	yes/no

Appendix III: Sampling Modeling

Table A: Strata Size Estimations based on Different Stratification Strategies

	CG	UK	OD	Summary Quantities	
Applicants	111192	32396	21137		
Sample %	0.03	0.1	0.15		
Attempted Calls	CG	UK	OD	Total # Attempted Calls	
Total	3335.76	3239.6	3170.55	9745.91	
Cohort A	2223.84	2159.733	2113.7		
Cohort B0	1111.92	1079.866	1056.85		
Successful Calls	CG	UK	OD	Total # Successful Calls	
Cohort A: Estimate Response Rate	0.25	0.25	0.25	Cohort A	
Cohort A: Successful Calls	555.96	539.9333	528.425	1624.318333	Total
Cohort B0: Estimate Response Rate	0.5	0.5	0.5	Cohort B0	3248.636667
Cohort B0: Successful Calls	555.96	539.9333	528.425	1624.318333	
Sampling Method I: By cohort/state/ district	CG	UK	OD		
The Number of Districts	33	13	30		
N_Average per stratum (per cohort/state/district)	16.84727	41.53333	17.61416	Total # of Strata (i.e. Cells)	
# of Strata	66	26	60	152	
Sampling Method II: By cohort/state/ gender	CG	UK	OD		
The Number of Gender	2	2	2		
N_Average per stratum (per cohort/state/gender)	277.98	269.9666	264.2125	Total # of Strata (i.e. Cells)	
# of Strata	4	4	4	12	
Sampling Method III: By cohort/state/ district/gender	CG	UK	OD		
N_Average per stratum (per cohort/state/district/gender)	8.423636	20.76666	8.807083	Total # of Strata (i.e. Cells)	
# of Strata	132	52	120	304	

Table 2: Calling Capacity Projections

Enumerator Output/Month	
Target # (Successful) Calls / Day, per Enumerator	10
# of Working Days / Month	20
# of Enumerators	8
Est. # of Suc. Calls / Month	1600
Est. Survey Duration (months)	2.030

Please see the full analysis at [this spreadsheet](#).

Appendix IV: Reasons for Switching to non-RTE-schools

Survey respondents list “Long Distance” as the most frequent reason for children switching to non-RTE schools, at 51.4% and 73.9% for both cohorts 2022-23 and 2021-22. The next most commonly listed reason was “Transportation Cost”, at 19.4% and 9.9%, respectively.

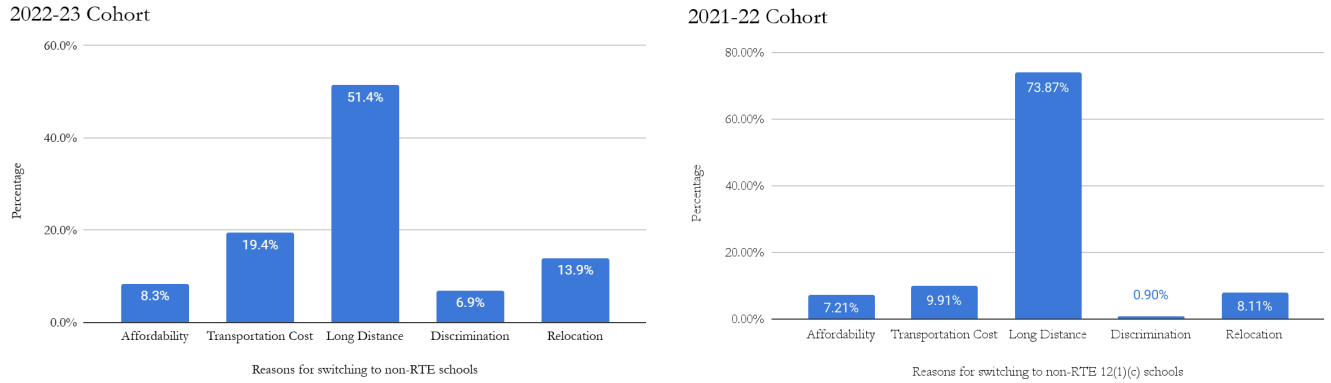


Figure B: Reasons given by parents for switching their children from RTE to non-RTE schools, for the cohorts entering in academic years 2021-22 and 2022-23, respectively. We exclude those answering “Other” and “Refused to Respond”.

Appendix V: Example Slide from Enumerator Training

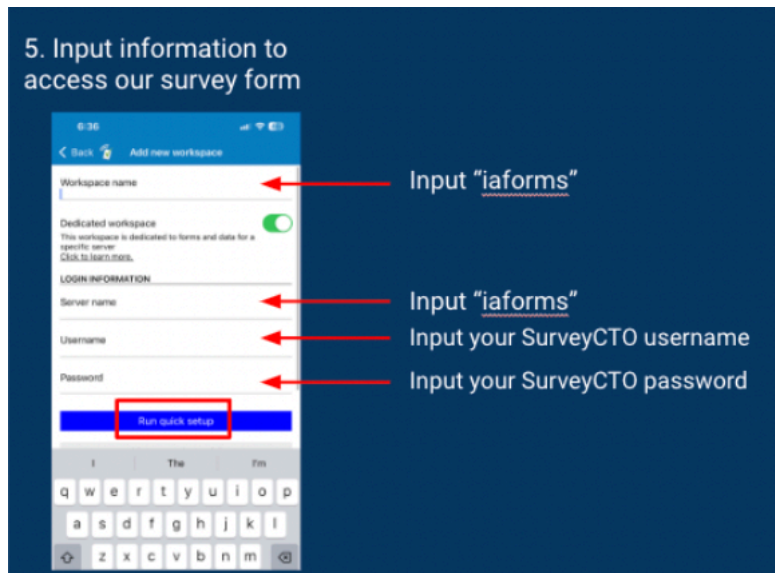


Figure C: Example slide from enumerator training.

Appendix VI: Number of completed surveys by cohort and gender of child.

Figure D: Number of completed surveys, by cohort (21-22 vs 22-23).

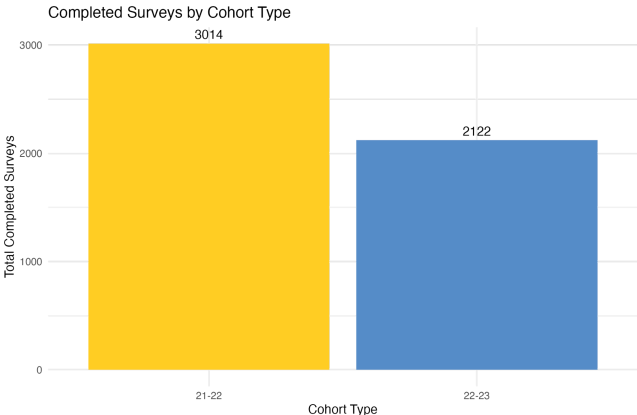
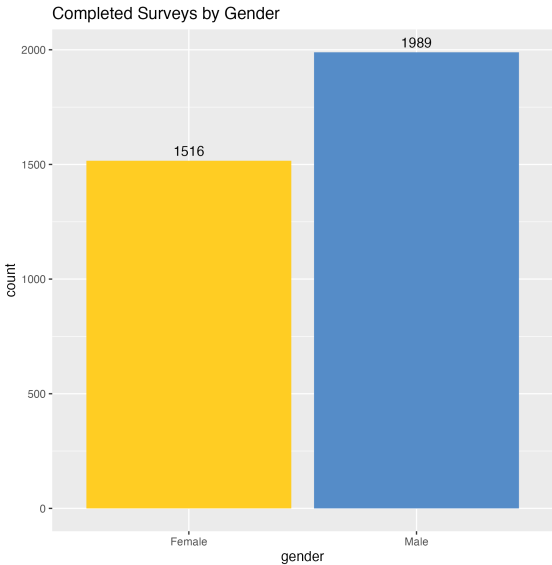


Figure E: Number of completed surveys, by gender of child/student.



Appendix VII: Proportion of 2022-23 Cohort Paying Different Types of School Fees

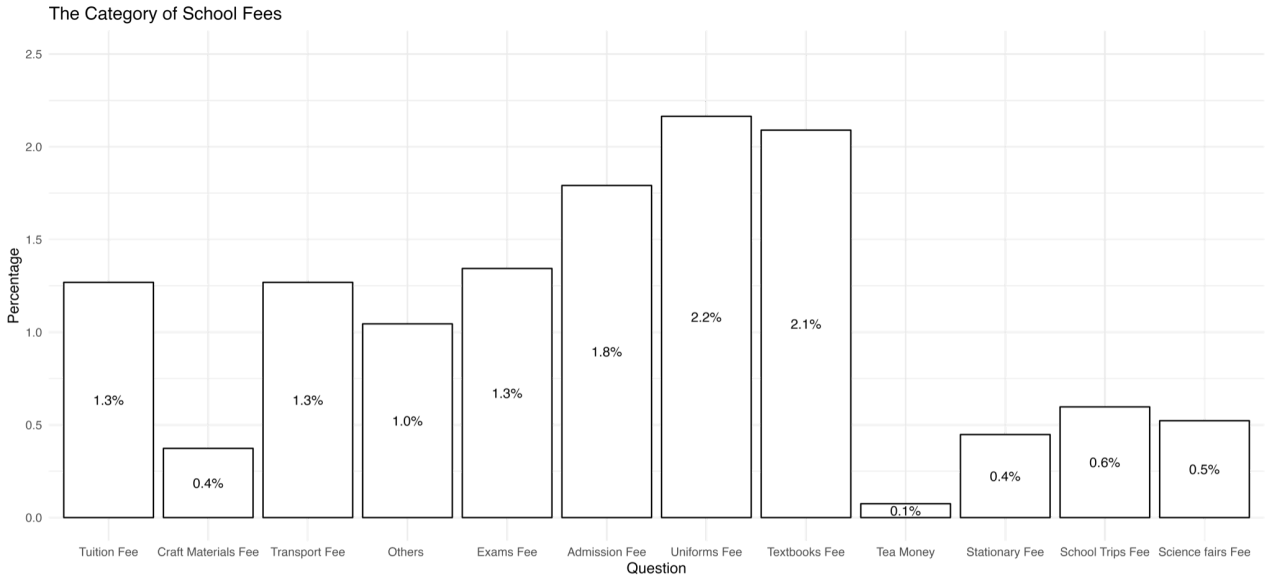


Figure F: Breakdown of types of school fees paid by respondents, for 2022-23 cohort.



In an effort to promote educational equality and social inclusion, India passed the Right to Education Act in 2009. The act guarantees free and compulsory elementary education for children in grades 1-8. Clause 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act specifically mandates that private unaided schools reserve 25 per cent of their seats in elementary grades 1- 8 for children from economically weaker sections and disadvantaged groups. While the number of students gaining access to private school education under the RTE 12(1)(c) clause is reported through government websites, the demographic of the students being admitted, the retention rates once admitted, and the social and financial constraints they might experience in their schooling are not. Thus, Indus Action has been studying students' retention, educational status and discrimination faced by students admitted under Section RTE 12(1)(c) since 2017. Studying retention allows governments to check for the successful implementation of the provision and to determine whether private schools are an optimal choice for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.



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